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OPEN YOURSELF TO GOD'S **GENEROSITY**

As we begin another year, let me unpack the story in the Bible about the prophet Elijah running out of supplies.

Some people think that if you're close to God, you'll never have needs. Not true. Jesus' followers are not exempt from problems. But their perspective is different. People who don't have a relationship with God see their jobs or businesses as their source of supply. We don't. God is our only source of supply, and our jobs and businesses are simply pipelines connected to that one source. So if we lose our job or fail in our business, we believe that God is simply changing our pipelines for better ones.

If your boss fires you, or your company folds up, or your business crashes, tell yourself, "God is changing my pipeline to better ones."

And that's what He was doing with Elijah. The Lord said to him, "Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of

Sidon. There is a widow there who will feed you. I have given her My instructions."

To God, giving is not just a nice thing to do. Giving is so serious to God, it's not left to chance. God has designed a matrix of generosity—composed of givers and receivers. God has assigned specific people to bless you, and God has assigned you to bless specific people—and ministries.

Here's my question to you: Who's your Elijah? What ministry should you be providing for?

Even with her limited resources, the widow still served Elijah, and the reward was amazing—an overflow of her flour and oil, an assurance that she and her son won't die of starvation.

I believe that if you learn to give, you shall have plenty.

This New Year, may we open our hearts to God's abundant blessings by responding to the call to generosity.

May your dreams come true,



The prayer in the Point of Contact page in a 2008 issue of *Kerygma* magazine became God's instrument for me to pass the licensure exams for accountants in 2010. Thank you, *Kerygma*, for being my source of inspiration during the difficult times. May you continue to inspire people, the way you inspired me.



**Christine Joy Alejo, CPA
San Mateo, Rizal**

I always look forward to reading *Kerygma* magazine. The topics are very relevant and you can sense that they were written with sincerity. It never fails to make me feel inspired, recharged, and restored. It truly is a life-changing magazine.



**Jocelyn Dimasacat
Singapore**

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THE ABUNDANCE OF TIME

It's not always fleeting

It was a throwback evening packed with memories and laughter. The classy, quiet ambience of the Manila House was shattered by our giddy-as-schoolgirls guffaws. This was a reunion of classmates—some who were separated from as far back as grade two. It was made extra special because we were celebrating the milestone of turning fifty years old.

Half a century is a long time to live, especially when you feel you're still the same giggly, little girl you were in grade school. It's a good time to look back at life and reflect, *What have I done? How have I lived? What are my regrets and how should I live differently in the next half of my life unapologetically?*

This led me to reflect on time, that one finite commodity that comes in equal amounts to prince and pauper alike. You can't hoard time no matter how rich you are, but sadly, you can waste it. Most of us know and experience it only in one aspect of its meaning because English only has one word for it. But ancient Greeks have two words for time.

The first, *kronos*, is linear, chronological time. It is time as defined by date, hours, minutes, and seconds. The second, *kairos*, refers to the right or opportune time. In the New Testament, Jesus used *kairos* more often than *kronos*. Although His public ministry lasted only three years, He was able to spend His limited days in a way that counted for eternity.

While the Greeks personified Father Time as someone like the Grim Reaper—old, bent, and with an hourglass in one hand and a scythe in the other—Kairos, in contrast, is a youthful man who runs like the wind on tiptoe. His long hair hangs over his face but he's bald at the back. Why? Because you have to grab him by his forelocks when you meet him—and if he passes you by, you can no longer take hold of him.

In Ecclesiastes 3 where it talks about the appointed time for everything, it is the word *kairos*, not *kronos*, that's used. It talks about God's perfect timing for every mundane activity that happens in our life—birth and death, sowing and reaping, killing and healing, weeping and laughing, mourning and dancing, silence and speaking.

As I turn half a century this year, I've reached a point in my life when I've made time my friend. While all of us have twenty-four hours a day—no more, no less—for me, time has become abundant. For while I've grown to respect time for its days, hours,

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and minutes, I've learned more importantly to seize the *kairos* that my God so generously gives me at every moment. 🕒

Everything is appropriate in its own time. But though God has planted eternity in the hearts of men, even so, many cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

about the writers

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JPaul Hernandez is the builder of The Feast Greenhills and The Feast Ortigas Galleria Tuesday. He authored three books, *A Young Man's Manual to a Successful Life*, *How Underdogs Can Become Overcomers*, and *How to Overcome Financial Stress*, all available at www.kerygamabooks.com.



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1



“If we start without confidence, we have already lost half the battle and we bury our talents.”



2

“The most important thing in the life of every man and every woman is not that they should never fall along the way. The important thing is always to get back up, not to stay on the ground, licking your wounds.”

3



“The Lord draws good out of evil through His power and His infinite creativity.”

8

“We ask that Jesus protect our Church always, that He protect Her with His mercy, granting each one of us His forgiveness.”

9

“Meek and humble of heart, close to the people, with compassion, with meekness and tenderness. This is Jesus.”

10

“Goodness is loving and never imposes itself. It is a choice.”

14

“Remember, the more you give yourselves to others, the more you will receive and be happy!”

15

“Faith helps us grasp the meaning of life: God is with us and loves us infinitely.”

16

“True peace is a gift of God that springs from healed and reconciled hearts, and reaches out to embrace the entire world.”

20

“By embracing God’s love, we change the world and transform history.”

21



“To pray is the first missionary task of every Christian. It is also the most effective.”



22

“Our world needs a revolution of love! Let that revolution begin with you and your families!”

26

“When we place ourselves at the service of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, we experience the joy of unconditional love.”

27

“The Kingdom of God grows in a mysterious and surprising way throughout the world with the power of a tiny seed.”

28

“Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home.”

4

“Let us allow the Holy Spirit to clothe us with the weapons of dialogue, understanding, the search for mutual respect and fellowship!”

6

“Let us offer our lives in service and in joy, to make known to everyone that Jesus Christ is our only hope!”

7

“If you want to reach the heart of God, take the way of mercy, and allow yourself to be treated with mercy.”

5

“Peace is a choice: it cannot be imposed and it isn’t found by chance.”

12

“Jesus came down on earth so that we could go up to heaven: this is the mystery of the Cross.”

13

“Let us involve ourselves in our relationship of love with Jesus and we will be able to perform good works that have the fragrance of the Gospel.”

11

“Mary, our Mother, knows the joys and difficulties that we experience along our journey.”

18

“The love of Christ, welcomed with an open heart, changes us, transforms us, and makes us able to love.”

19

“If the Lord has gifted you with riches, it is in order to do lots of good things for others in His name.”

17

“May God’s love become more and more the force that guides and directs our freedom.”

24

“Love overcomes all difficulties. Love gives us the strength to carry on.”

25

“In silence, we learn to contemplate God’s works, which surpass all our imagination.”

23

“The Eucharist, Jesus the Bread of Life, is the beating heart of the Church and renews in us the impulse to love.”

29



“Life is a journey, along different roads, different paths, which leave their mark on us.”



30

“We Christians do not have a product to sell, we communicate life.”

31

“For all the obstacles we see before us, gratitude and appreciation should prevail over concerns and complaints.”



Travel 101: How to Pack Like a Pro

- Step 1: Gather all the necessary garments.** Pack more tops than bottoms.
- Step 2: Roll softer garments and fold stiffer ones.** T-shirts, underwear, knitwears won't wrinkle when rolled tightly; while stiffer fabrics include blazers, pants, and jackets.
- Step 3: Arrange rolled items in the bottom.** This helps maximize space and minimize wrinkles.
- Step 4: Place folded garments next.** Start with the longer items such as slacks and skirts. Stack next the shorter items.
- Step 5: Cover the pile with a dry-cleaning bag.** Folded clothes don't stay in one place, long enough for creases to set, because of the bag's slippery surface.
- Step 6: Snake belts around the perimeter of the bag.** Belts cradle the layers of clothes.
- Step 7: Slip shoes into resealable bags.** Set them along the free area of the bag.
- Step 8: Separate toiletries and put them in a kit.** Packing them in an easy access location is convenient, plus it ensures you will not forget your set of bathroom products.
- Step 9: Stow inexpensive pieces in a plastic pillbox.** If you must take precious gems, wear them during your travels to reduce the risk of loss or theft.
- Step 10: Wrap fragile items in sturdy clothing.** Place them in the center of your bag surrounded by a buffer to avoid breakage.

Young Olympian Gives Up Speed Skating Career



Now a Franciscan Nun

American Olympic speed skater Kirstin Holum responded to the religious vocation, swapping her sports career for a life in the convent in Leeds, England.

At sixteen, Holum visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, where she heard God's calling. "It was the first time in my life I truly knew that Jesus was real, alive, that He loved me and had a plan for my life. I could barely make it to the pew. I was so overwhelmed with joy at knowing the love of Jesus in that moment."

When she returned home from the Fatima pilgrimage, she asked the Blessed Mother to pray for her speed skating career. The next year, she competed at the 1998 Nagano Winter Games in Japan. She placed sixth in the 3,000 meters and seventh in the 5,000 meters.

Holum had already set eight U.S. speed skating records and six junior world records.

Even though her skating career was booming, she did not feel at peace. "There was this restlessness in my heart, and I just knew there was more to life for me than sports."

Holum went to art school and finished a bachelor's degree. Consequently, she met young people on fire for their faith, as she joined a walk across America for the pro-life movement. The walk ended during the World Youth Day. "[It] was a powerful experience of seeing the Church so young, vibrant, and alive, and seeing a lot of religious sisters—young nuns everywhere!"

Their example brought her back to the Lord. In 2003, Holum entered the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal. "It was through the Lord purifying my heart through prayer, confession, and the sacraments of the Church that I came to remember His plan for my life, and to be open to His plan."

THE LIGHT OF JESUS PASTORAL CARE CENTER

A Journey of 25 Years

By Gladys Barrer

And the Lord God said: it is not good for man to be alone. – Genesis 2:18

It is said that life is a journey. And from the very start, God did not intend for man (or woman) to travel through life alone. We need a companion to help us navigate the hard places. We want to celebrate our successes with our companions along the way.

Yet there are times when we feel alone as we encounter the rough spots in life. Although we know that we have a constant traveling companion in Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we don't always realize how close They are. So we look around for somebody to help us in a time of need. This is the role of Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center (LOJPCC).

It all began with a burden for God's lost and wounded people. And so to firm up the concept of helping through pastoral care and counseling, a group was formed by Bo Sanchez. After several brainstorming sessions, the LOJPCC extended its services to the Light of Jesus Community and beyond.

How Far We Have Gone

That was twenty-five years ago. And there is much reason to celebrate. Here are a few things that have changed since it started:

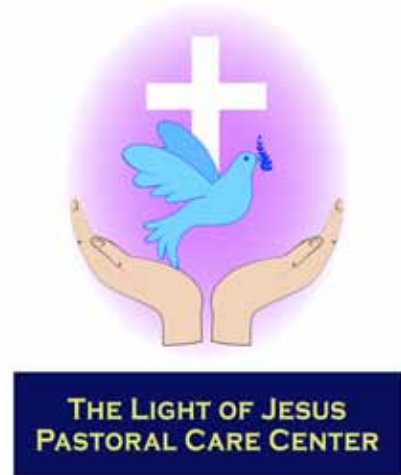
- **From six to over thirty.** The pioneers—Ditas and Vic Español, Cristy Galang, Avic Achaval, Janette Ealdama (deceased), and Babes Fontillas—volunteered their services willingly. After a while, they realized they needed more volunteers if the ministry was to grow. So they began training new recruits through basic and advanced courses in pastoral care and counseling. Today, the center maintains a pool of pastoral care volunteers who make themselves available to its various clients.
- **From half a night to almost 24/7.** When the center first offered its service, this was only available after office hours when the pioneers worked in the premises of Shepherd's Voice Publications (SVP) in the Lighthouse located at 60 Chicago St. Cubao, Quezon City. Today, the center has its own space in the Lighthouse and volunteers serve clients from early Monday morning straight through to Saturday afternoon (except for monthly meetings on the third Saturday, and weather permitting), and Sunday mornings.

- **From a borrowed line to dedicated telephone lines.** Twenty-five years ago, the center took over the telephone lines of SVP after office hours as it did not have its own facilities. Today, it has three dedicated telephone lines (7266728 / 7260267 / 7264709) plus a cellular phone (0922-8407031) that clients can dial to reach the center. Over the Internet, clients can connect via our chat room or by messaging our Facebook page.
- **From one to many services.** The original idea was to do pastoral counseling by conversing with the client over the phone. This was an almost unheard-of concept when the ministry was born. But when facilities became available, face-to-face counseling, online chat, and e-mail counseling (lojpastoralcare@gmail.com) were added. Today, seminars and workshops, and social media availability are part of their offerings.

Despite the center's growth, some things have remained the same. The center sees to it that the volunteers are equipped to handle situations that clients bring to them. Whatever mode of delivery is used, the client should feel the empathy of the pastoral care servant. And, of course, the approach is still Christ-centered using psycho-spiritual modalities.

Marking a Milestone

Surviving twenty-five years is something to celebrate. For 2018, the center put together a series of events to do just that. On June 12, they conducted a public seminar called "Over the Edge: Understanding Depression and Suicide" to raise awareness on what really goes on when



a person becomes clinically depressed and contemplates suicide.

Another public seminar happened on August 21 called “After and Through: Rising Above Grief and Loss,” where the speakers discussed what a person with a major loss in their life goes through, and how we should communicate with a person who is grieving.


The center opened a support group called Roadstead for caregivers of clinically depressed persons and self-harming individuals. Roadstead now meets regularly at the Lighthouse office. Plans are on the way to expand this service to other areas for the convenience of its clients.

It also had a pilot run of the workshop series “Women at the Well.” This is a healing series designed for women who are relationally broken and who want to drink of the water of life like the Samaritan woman who encountered Jesus at Jacob’s well (John 4:1-26). To minister to the woundedness of our clients, the pastoral workers equip themselves with ways to deal with specific situations. Early in the year, they had a special growth session on dealing with child and adolescent issues. They focused on relating with children of the digital age.

A celebration would not be complete without a party. So the volunteers and their friends gathered together at Conti’s Bakeshop in Greenbelt to make merry. The occasion was graced by Bo Sanchez who commended the volunteers as his heroes. Certificates were also given to those who have served the ministry for over ten years.

What’s Next?

For 2019, the center plans to offer more seminars to tackle problems that people often struggle with. They kick the year off with a retreat called Journey to Personal Growth, a self-discovery weekend that puts you on the path of spiritual and emotional growth (call the center for more information). Those interested in becoming part of the ministry are welcome to volunteer and be trained to minister to our callers and visitors.

As long as we are journeying through this life, we need traveling companions. Sometimes we lose sight of our constant companion who is Jesus. Let’s reconnect with Him and help others reconnect as well. The Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center is here to serve you. 

By being a Kerygma Mission Partner, you will not just subscribe to our highly inspiring magazine. You will also contribute to all our ministries and be a blessing to Anawim – our home for the aged; He Cares and Tahanan ng Pagmamahal – our ministry for street children and orphans; Grace to Be Born – a halfway house for unwed mothers and their babies; and Shepherd’s Voice Radio and Television Foundation – our media ministry.



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How Can We Strengthen the Relationship of Our Parishioners?

As a parish servant, I notice that the Mass goers just come for Mass, but they are not interested in other activities and in building relationship with other Mass goers. We want to bridge the gap this year but we don't know what to do. Hope you can give us some advice.

PPC Leader

Dear PPC Leader,

Such an honorable intention! I am sure building relationships with other Mass goers is pleasing to our Lord who is a community within Himself—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Recently in our parish, the assistant parish priest announced their intention to gather the daily morning Mass goers to be named the “Morning Group.” Their team started by giving out a form for us to fill out. It required just three basic data: name, address, and contact numbers with a promise to get back to us soon. I think the first gathering will be a discussion or sharing on a common task we can do together or, as they say, as the Spirit leads!

This is actually one possible answer to your query. The Sunday Mass goers may not be all parishioners. Some may be there because their family lives there or they have an engagement near the area. However, you can also reach out to them but lessen your expectation as far as response is concerned. Or you can have a separate group for Sunday when you organize your first general gathering. It may be good to have a program flow with a short talk or video on “being a community” or “why you say no to being a solo Christian” or “why not remain strangers in our parish”—things like that.

In other words, you may have to do some community organizing tasks in the parish. You'll be surprised that some of them are already actively serving transparochial communities or similar groups. You'll have to assure them the motive is just to “shake hands” and become acquainted so that when the priest tells you to give the sign of peace to one another during the Mass, you feel a sense of family. Of course, it's an open door for whoever may want more parish involvement. The rest can enjoy fellowships or gatherings to pray and share together.

I hope these suggestions help.



Cristy Galang has been serving San Juan Nicolas de Tolentino Parish for many years, building Basic Ecclesial Communities in the parish and doing catechetical work. She is a licensed guidance counselor and a certified counseling psychologist. She is one of the pioneers of the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center. E-mail her at cristy_cc@yahoo.com.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

By Allan and Maribel Dionisio

After being married for thirty-four years now, we are grateful that we found each other and worked on being happy as a couple. On top of this, we enjoyed raising our three children, now grownups: Raf, a social entrepreneur; Dav, a singer, songwriter, and actor; and Gica, a psychologist. What helped us get here was our marriage preparation.

Thirty-five years ago, the Discovery Weekend (DW) was a huge boost to our marriage. We attended DW as boyfriend/girlfriend for five years, thinking of marriage but not yet engaged to be married. We discovered a lot more about each other that Maribel canceled our wedding twice!

We had another weekend session with Sister Tessie, a Cenacle sister who helped us deepen our relationship. We learned to talk about our issues—especially the differences, that eventually got us to the altar on November 10, 1984 at the Sacred Heart Church in Kamuning, Quezon City. That's a total of two weekends and a year of monthly marriage mentoring sessions! We learned the techniques of steering our marriage to a joyful one.

Fast forward, we have been involved in the Discovery Weekend (Marriage Preparation Foundation, Inc.) since 1984, preparing couples for marriage. As relationship consultants, we now recommend four weekend seminars to prepare for marriage.

Proposal #1: Three Weekend Seminars and One-on-One Sessions

1. Discovery Weekend by the Marriage Preparation Foundation, Inc. covers topics on relational skills, communication, morality, and sexuality, and the three stages of love. Visit www.discoveryweekend.org for more details.
2. Cana Seminar by Center for Family Ministries (CEFAM) focuses on marriage expectations, family of origin, and the sacrament of marriage. E-mail cefam_ed@yahoo.com.ph or call (632) 426-4289 to 92.
3. Reparenting the Child Within 1 (RCW 1) by the Reintegration for Care and Wholeness Foundation, Inc. is a personal growth seminar to unload emotional baggages and address individual issues that may hinder a happy marriage. E-mail rcw_foundation@yahoo.com or visit www.rcwcares.org.ph for more information.
4. One-on-one sessions with Maribel Dionisio and Love Team for in-depth advice on life plan, career and parenthood, financial planning, family planning method, etc. E-mail maribelandallandionisio@gmail.com or call +63917-592-7735.

Proposal #2:

Five One-on-One Sessions and RCW 1

1. Five sessions (three hours each) with Maribel Dionisio and Love Team

Session 1

Introduction and Coverage of Marriage Preparation

Marriage Expectations and Dreams

Life Plan and Mucus-Ovulation Method or the Billings Method

Session 2

Family of Origin and Family Floor Plan Part 1
Dialogue Skills, Art of Fighting, and Frustration List

Session 3

Family of Origin and Family Floor Plan Part 2
Financial Planning, Career, and Lifestyle

Session 4

Emotional Maturity

In-Laws and Parents

Assignment: Appreciation Letter and

Marriage Vows; Letter of Thanks to Parents

Session 5

Sex and Sexuality

Emotional Needs of Men and Women

Spirituality of Marriage

2. RCW 1 (Reparenting the Child Within 1), a two-and-a-half-day seminar for personal growth and understanding. Visit www.rcwcares.org.ph.

This whole marriage preparation program is for couples in a relationship who are thinking of marriage, whether soon or in the near future, and want to know more about the requirements of marriage. It provides roadmaps toward a loving, mature, and mutually satisfying married life.

The marriage preparation may cost you a sum of money but these sessions can really help you achieve true joy in marriage.

Go and invest in your future marriage.

Prepare thoroughly! 🏠



10

Simple Daily Commitments to Body Health

By Dr. Didoy Lubaton

Just like a car, your body needs to undergo periodic maintenance. Listen to your body and be mindful of what it needs. Honor your body with these Ten Health Commitments.

1. **Wash Your Hands.** The World Health Organization says that washing your hands is the simplest and most effective way in controlling the spread of disease. Remember, clean hands save lives.

When your hands are visibly dirty, wash with mild soap and running water. When there's none, use a hand sanitizer at least. Wash especially before and after going to the toilet. Before shaking hands with another person, check if your hands are clean.

2. **Cut It Clean.** Long nails can harbor many disease-causing agents underneath. Keep them short and keep them clean. No nail-biting please.
3. **Shower Power.** Your body is exposed to the elements, and it gathers dust and dirt all the time. Microorganisms like bacteria love a warm, moist, and dirty body. It multiplies and gives you body odor. Remember that your skin is the primary defense of the body. Lather up with mild soap to avoid dryness. Rub your body gently, focusing on some areas that produce a lot of sweat and oil like armpits and groin. Make sure you rinse thoroughly too; don't leave any residue on your skin. Best to use an herbal, chemical-free soap with some natural oils. It cleans well and also protects your skin.
4. **Keep Your Mouth Clean.** Your mouth is one of the gateways to the body. Your teeth and gums are like towers that guard the passageway. Brush your teeth after every meal because particles stuck in your teeth and mouth become food for microorganisms that may lead to tooth decay and gum problems. Best if you use soft bristles to brush your teeth gently. Go for natural ingredients for the agents that you use on your mouth. Floss daily. See your dentist once every six months. Your saliva also acts as a cleaning agent. That's why naturally sour fruits or food are good for your mouth because it promotes saliva production. Get well hydrated too to keep your mouth and lips from cracking.
5. **Sprinkle as a Routine.** I recommend that you empty your urinary bladder as a routine. Go to the toilet every three to four hours, or whenever possible. Healthy kidneys produce urine of at least thirty milliliters per hour and this is stored in your bladder. Empty your bladder to avoid stasis of urine that promotes bacterial growth, which may lead to urinary infection. Ladies, wipe from up to down to avoid contaminating your urethra. Gentlemen, shake it off if you must. Wash your hands after, OK?
6. **Squat for #2.** Let me give you an anatomy lesson. Your

rectum is naturally in a curved position when you stand. In that position, it's almost impossible to poop, thanks to your puborectalis muscle. This muscle relaxes slightly when you sit down. The curve of your rectum is less but the passageway is still not at its best position for waste elimination. Stool may be left behind in your rectum. This can become toxic to your body and may lead to microorganism growth, inflammation, and eventually, disease. This position also makes you strain and push waste with effort, which may lead to hemorrhoids. For full release of the stools, try squatting. Your puborectalis fully relaxes and your rectum is in a much straighter position for full transit.

7. **Sit and Stand Like a Soldier.** My yoga teacher said that a healthy spine leads to a healthy body. Your spine plays a big role because it houses the spinal cord from which spinal nerves emerge. This controls the functions of your body, including internal organs and limbs. It's the path of communication from your brain to your body. A good connection means good functioning of your body.

Keep your spine straight but not stiff. When standing, take the posture of a soldier: chin up, chest out, shoulders aligned to your ears, and tummy in. Do the same when sitting. Rest your back on the chair and leave no space on your lower back so it's supported. Avoid looking down on your computer or gadget for a long period of time because it tenses up your neck and shoulder muscles. Regularly break to stretch to avoid sitting for a long time and straining your neck muscles. Many of my patients recover from back pains just by maintaining a good posture.

8. **Do Some Locomotion.** Our body is made to move! Most gadgets now have step trackers that count how much you've walked for the day. Aim for at least 10,000 steps a day. When you wake up, do stretching exercises from head to toe. This can also improve your blood circulation.
9. **Soak in the Sun.** The longer your shadow, the longer you can stay under the sun. This stimulates our skin to produce natural vitamin D. If you work indoors all day, go out and get some sun during breaks. The sun is also a natural antidepressant.
10. **Breathe Like a Baby.** Practice deep breathing during breaks. When you do, you inhale more life-giving oxygen and exhale more carbon dioxide waste out of your body. It's a quick relief from headache, muscle pain, and even anxiety. 🐣

USE THE MAGIC OF A CLEAN SLATE IN

2019!

By Rose Fres Fausto

Now that the year is new, let's all take advantage of the power of its freshness. Close your eyes and erase all the worries and regret over the unfulfilled goals and other negative issues in 2018! They all belong in the past and you're not there anymore so stop carrying the burden.

One of my favorite toys when I was young was the magic slate. Indeed, there is magic that a clean slate brings to every person. Here are some related points that could help us accomplish our goals for the year:

1. **The immaculate white canvas brings hope.** If we know that we are starting fresh, with no specks of wrongdoings, we tend to be optimistic and are able to summon the best in us. This is why we start the year hopeful, because we haven't done anything wrong yet! So let's take advantage of this image of a clean slate to muster all our energy and optimism to forge ahead and do what we have to do this year.
2. **Novelty has the power to create new habits.** When one is in a new chapter in life, whether positive (a promotion, new home, newly wed, etc.) or negative (breakup, job loss, loss of a household helper or a loved one, etc.), it is easier to develop a new habit. Losing a family driver may be a blessing in disguise because they now have to find ways to bring the son to school. On the days Mom has to take him, she can finally go to the gym early morning. On Dad's days, he can now have one-on-one conversations with his son at least twice a week. So the next time we're pushed out of our comfortable routines, find ways to create a habit that's beneficial.
3. **A clean slate can help you wean off an old habit.** For parents of younger kids, weaning their children from the bottle and the matrimonial bed are quite a challenge. In our experience, it was best to make an "event" out of them. Weaning should not be perceived as a loss or a detachment from something but more as a passage. The weaning was then associated with an accomplishment of a certain stage making them ready for the next one. For bottle-feeding, it was before they entered preschool (2.5 to three years old). For sleeping in their own bed/room, it was when we finally built our house. From a small two-bedroom apartment, it was easier to make the transition because everyone was excited now to have their own bigger space. Our oldest was 4.5 and the second was less than two. Our third had not been conceived yet. He also moved in with his older brothers at age two. For Mama's tutoring, it was upon entering grade two and was packaged as, "You're now an independent grade school boy!" (Note: I highly recommend three year gaps for children as this was an important aspect of my transition of tutoring from son one to two to three. This made it possible for me to just have one tutee at a time.)
4. **Keep your "clean record" clean.** There is a surge in the number of gym goers at the start of the year. Exercise is probably in

everyone's New Year's resolutions. Then there is a drop in attendance after a couple of months, and a further drop later on. Why? Because once we've put a spec on that "clean record," it's easier to miss another session, and another until we quit altogether. This is why we have to be very careful in missing a good habit. Since we know that there will always be days when we will miss a session, we have to "trick" ourselves a little. Let's say we promised to exercise at least three times a week. The moment we miss one day of that MWF schedule, write in your calendar how you intend to make up for that one hour. It can be with a Saturday or extra thirty minutes in your two other days. Once the mind is convinced that our commitment has not yet been broken, it will be easier for us to go on and keep the habit, because we still have that clean record.

5. **Do not always count on your willpower.** In all aspects of life, whether in our health, wealth, or integrity, we should not always assume that our well-formed willpower can help us make the right decisions every day to achieve our goals. We have to resort to life hacks that will make it easier for us to always do the right thing. The less decision-making needed, the better. Believe me, the presence of too many choices can be debilitating. ("Should I save and invest now or later when this and that excuse are already in place?" vs. "I'll sign up now so that every payday a percentage of my salary is automatically deducted and invested.")

As we start 2019 with a clean slate, I wish you all an energized and optimistic attitude. Let's get rid of all the negative clutter from the past that wastes our energy. If for any reason, we fail to do the things we set out to do as the days pass, don't worry too much. If Forrest Gump said that life is like a box of chocolates, I say, "Life is like a magic slate. If we make mistakes, all we have to do is lift up that upper sheet and voila! We can start over again." 🔄



In January each year, we celebrate the feast of the Santo Niño (Child Jesus), and commemorate the historic arrival of Christianity in our nation. Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan landed in Cebu on April 7, 1521, and gave as a gift an image of the Santo Niño to Raja Humabon and Hara Amihan. This paved the way for the Raja, his wife, and their subjects to be converted and become Christians.

Since then, the devotion to the Santo Niño has been handed down the generations, as well as stories from devotees about miraculous healings and saving help they received through the intercession of the Christ Child. Personally, I came to know about this devotion and its importance to my faith life from my mom—my youngest brother was born on January 19, and Mom says his birth was Santo Niño’s gift to our family. Indeed, my brother grew up as jolly and mild-mannered with wit and wisdom beyond his years.

But I wonder how many of us from the Gen X and older generations have shared to today’s generation about the Santo Niño and His pivotal role in our faith and cultural history? How many of them know that Jesus was once a child like them and who understands well their need to be in

awe, in wonder, and be carefree? That praying to the Child Jesus is the way for our prayers to reach the heavenly Father? That devotions and novenas to the Santo Niño, Mama Mary, and other angels and saints are beautiful ways we Catholics express our faith, surrender our challenges and struggles to an all-powerful God, and place our trust and hope in Him who saves?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, “There is no other way of Christian prayer than Christ. Whether our prayer is communal or personal, vocal, or interior, it has access to the Father only if we pray ‘in the name’ of Jesus. The sacred humanity of Jesus is

to Niño's Challenge:

CHILD LIKE,

By Dina Pecaña

PHILIPPINO

therefore the way by which the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray to God our Father.”

Pope Francis, in his homily on the feast day of the Santo Niño on January 17, 2015, reminded Filipinos about the “link between God’s Kingdom and the mystery of spiritual childhood.” The Santo Niño reminds us of our deepest identity as God’s children. Just as the image of the Child Jesus was a gift to our ancestors, Jesus and His mission has been given to us as Pope Francis said, “Filipinos are called to be outstanding missionaries of faith in Asia.” At the end of his homily, Pope Francis prayed, “Now, at the end of my visit to the Philippines, I commend you to Him, to Jesus who came among us as a child. May He enable all the beloved people of this country to work together, protecting one another, beginning with your families and communities, in building a world of justice, integrity, and peace. May the Santo Niño continue to bless the Philippines and may He sustain the Christians of this great nation in their vocation to be witnesses and missionaries of the joy of the Gospel, in Asia, and in the whole world.”

Here lies the Santo Niño’s challenge to us: to be childlike and surrender ourselves to the love and protection of the Father; and to be proud and appreciate the legacy God has given us as Filipinos. Pit Señor Santo Niño! ☪

saint at a glance

ST. ANTHONY MARY PUCCI

Feast Day: January 12

Birth: 1819

Death: 1892

Anthony’s steadfast devotion to Mary caused him to enter the Servite Order at the age of eighteen. He was ordained in 1843, and was assigned as parish priest to a town in Viareggio, Italy.

He was called as *il curatino* (the little pastor) because he was a dedicated father to his flock. He had shown charity to the needy, love and care to the sick, aged, and broken, which was deeply heightened during the cholera epidemic of 1854 to 1856. He worked day and night just to help those who were affected.

He founded the Holy Childhood Society, the first permanent seaside home for the sick and poor children.

He had pneumonia on a winter’s day after he gave his coat to a poor man on the street. A few days later, he died a holy death.

Source:

<https://www.catholic.org/>

<https://catholicsaints.info/>





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How God Worked Through My Addictions

By Niel Jhocson as told to Joana Piñon-Bertumen



It was another unsuccessful day of attempting to sell condominiums for a real estate company. It had gotten so late that the subway trains in Singapore had stopped running. I had no choice but to walk home in the dark streets. It took me several hours to get home on foot. I cried as I felt I was pretty much a useless person.

This was my turning point to recovery as I realized I had already hit rock bottom. After losing several job opportunities, what I thought would be my big break turned out to be one of my biggest rejections as my clients backed out, I lost my passport, and I spent the money the company gave me as an allowance.

It was then that I asked my mom for help. I needed to go to rehab. I was depressed, hallucinating to the point that I was already talking to myself. When I returned to Manila, I took the twelve steps to recovery program and spent ten months in a center as an outpatient, biking to Makati where it was located, every single day. This was how I ended the long cycle of addiction and codependency I struggled with.

Not Your Typical Drug Addict

My addiction started even before I reached high school. I studied in an exclusive school for boys where students always had the latest shoes every month, while I had to wait for my aunt to send me new shoes from the States on my birthday and Christmas.

Mama went to Saudi when I was nine or ten. I was a Mama's boy and spent almost every day with her, staying in her dental clinic after school. I felt abandoned when she left.

My relationship with my father wasn't so good. I didn't understand that he was only trying to discipline me. When I was more mature, I learned that he did what he did to help make me a better person. He didn't want me to end up a failure.

I learned to cut classes, smoke marijuana, and look at porn in grade seven. It was when the school called my mom that she decided to go home to guide and mentor me as I grew up.

I was looking for a spiritual mentor at the time so I joined a Charismatic community as a youth. But it felt so rigid, and people seemed so holy that I didn't feel at home. I stopped attending. I went back to my old ways, and this time, it got worse.

As a teenage boy, I was one of those "cool kids" who would attend fairs at exclusive girls' schools. There I met rich kids from different schools and started hanging out with them. I got exposed to ecstasy and we would gatecrash parties and take drugs. I used marijuana almost every three days, and ecstasy every weekend. I knew I was getting out of control when I stole a part of Dad's salary. Like a thief, I crawled on all fours toward his wallet as he slept.

The next day, I went to school and treated all of my friends. This established my status as a moneyed guy and I clung to that false identity. After a while, I sold Stilnox and Valium, both downers. I was on and off in taking and selling drugs until I was twenty-four.

My need to establish my status led to a cross addiction—money. I lied, cheated, and stole to get my hands on them. A critical moment for me was when a friend left a phone, but since he was known to steal phones as well, we thought of getting back at him. We stole his phone when he wasn't looking and sold it for P18,000 in Greenhills. This started a cycle where I stole phones, stole money from relatives, and even jewelry from my grandma and pawned them. I used the money to treat people and even spent P50,000 in one day. I reveled in the attention of people.

I also had another cross addiction—relationships. Because I didn't get the affirmation I needed from my family due to my constant failures, I always needed someone beside me to tell me that I am loved.



“Through Myla, I learned how to have a personal relationship with God.”

I also had another cross addiction—relationships. Because I didn't get the affirmation I needed from my family due to my constant failures, I always needed someone beside me to tell me that I am loved. I didn't finish college because I gave my tuition fee to my girlfriend then who needed it for her own tuition. This was just one of the extreme things I did to make them stay. I would never be vacant in the romance department and would jump from one girlfriend to the next.

I realized I was addicted to dysfunctional codependent relationships when I reunited with my ex from high school. We were both broken and I tried to save her when I couldn't even help myself. I was cutting work in a bank just to spend my lunch hour with her. I consequently lost my job but still went to see her every day. We broke up because we knew we weren't good for each other. At this point, I had no work and I was in debt.

It was around this time that I sold my mom's car without her permission. I ran away from home and lived in Las Piñas coastal road by a squatters' area. I just wanted to get out and tried to live on my own for five months but I couldn't find a job. It was then that I realized I needed my mom.

My mom forgave me and was ready to give me another chance. This happened before I went to Singapore and after that, she supported my recovery program.

God Used People to Help Me Transform

I met Myla Abeleda when I was still in rehab. I told her who I was and, for the first time, I was transparent to someone. All my exes didn't know my background of drugs and not finishing school. She said yes to dating and it was surreal for me that someone accepted me for who I was.

Myla invited me to The Feast. Before we met, she had a checklist of characteristics for an ideal partner. Fortunately for me, God gave her a vision



*Top: Neil (right) with Erikson, whom he met in Camp Calye
Middle: Neil (second to the right) with his co-servants at
The Feast Valle Verde*

*Bottom: Neil leading worship at The Feast
Opposite page: Neil with Obet Cabrillas, builder of The
Feast Valle Verde*



to just love unconditionally instead. Even her family knows my history and they embraced me wholeheartedly. This experience of acceptance and unconditional love started to change me.

Through Myla, I learned how to have a personal relationship with God. When we started dating, I would bring Myla to The Feast and I would attend Mass but stay in a coffee shop while the talk was ongoing. This went on for almost two years because I felt that I had to follow the twelve steps to recovery first before thinking of church.

There was one event called Camp Calye, the annual summer youth camp, and there I met Erikson Mulawin, one of the servants, whom I could relate to. I eventually told myself that this is the community where I belong. I started attending The Feast and I didn't know that part of me was already changing. There were several experiences where I encountered Jesus through other people—Myla and Erikson—but it was really my experience at our feeding program that was life-changing for me.

The feeding program we had in Taytay squatters area overwhelmed me with how others served Christ. Our volunteers had less than I had but they went all out and they didn't ask for anything.

An addict is always a work in progress; it's a lifetime maintenance. Now I'm addicted only to healthy things with the help of my family, girlfriend, and community. These people stood by me at my lowest, and today I am able to share my story of transformation.

The difference now is I don't look for anything anymore. God has filled my life and He is more than enough for me. 🕊

Not sure of the nitty-gritty things you have to do to officially start a business?

THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU!

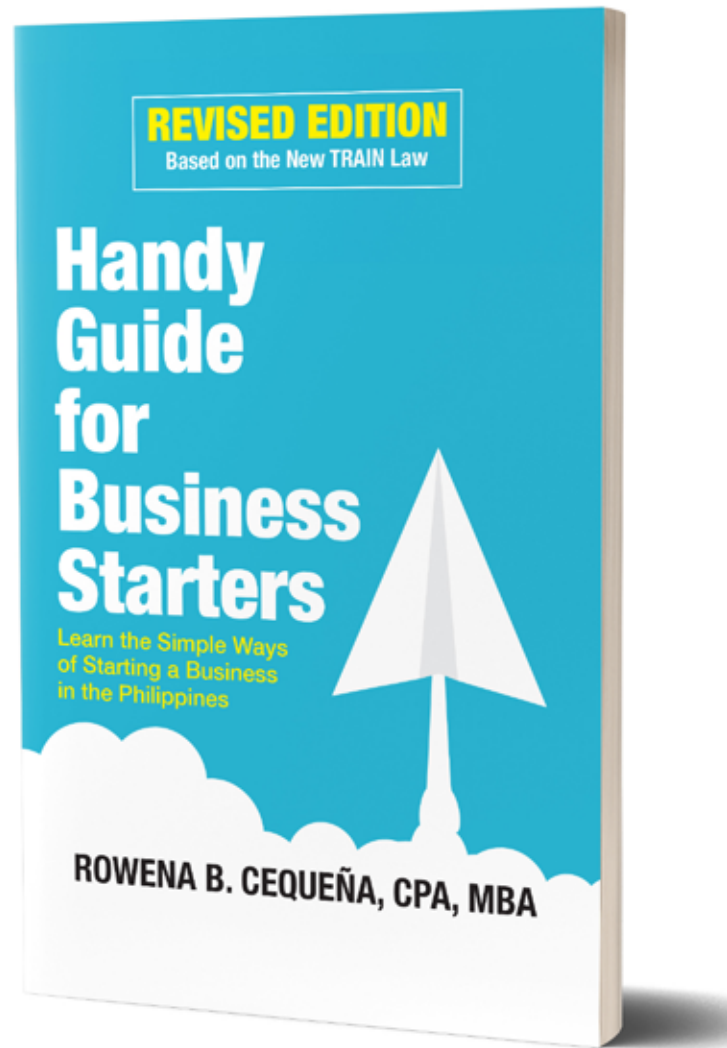
YOU'LL LEARN:

- REQUIREMENTS FOR BUSINESS REGISTRATION
- REPORTS NEEDED FOR BIR, SEC, DTI, ETC.
- BASIC ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES
- AND MORE.



Do you want to start a business? Believe me, this tiny book will save you a ton of money. My friend Weng wrote an easy-to-understand, step-by-step guide on all the government requirements you need to fulfill so you can have a business.

Bo Sanchez
bestselling author and Catholic lay preacher



kerygmabooks.com

Are you going through hard time? Did your dream job and dream company never call again? Was your visa application denied? Did that dream boyfriend turn into a nightmare? Did your longed-for business that was supposed to prosper you drag you down to poverty? Was life hard for you in 2018?

Here's the truth: The harder your life, the higher you bounce.

I borrowed this illustration from American pastor Steven Furtick: the ball's bounce depends on the surface where it bounces. If the surface is too soft, it bounces softly too. Some of us might have made our lives too soft, too easy, and too comfortable, so we don't have bouncing power.

But if you lived a hard life in 2018, you can choose to bounce higher this 2019. How? Start with imagination. Because what you imagine can become real. Your imagination is one of God's most powerful gifts to you. It's more powerful than your intellect and your emotions.

We have two God-given mental capacities: "to paint our present" and "to paint our future." To succeed in life, we need both. If all you do is paint the present, you're just describing. And this does not create hope. A lot of people are stuck in their career, finances, relationships, and spiritual life because of this. Every day,

all they think and talk about is reality—and usually, the negative side of reality: what's lacking, hurting, and failing in their "now."


This is why many people are discouraged. Painting your present is very important. But you can't live without hope.

You need to do the second kind of painting: paint your future.

Do you want to win in life? Start painting new worlds that have not yet been created. Paint beautiful paintings.

See your future. Start using your imagination. Question: What are you imagining regularly in your mind?

Paint beautiful paintings. Be inspired by the successful people around you. Do something repeatedly, no matter how small, until your imaginations turn into reality.

In this year's first issue, we want to help you dream again and set your goals for 2019. And we don't want just any kind of victory for you—we pray and hope for God's victory for your lives. 

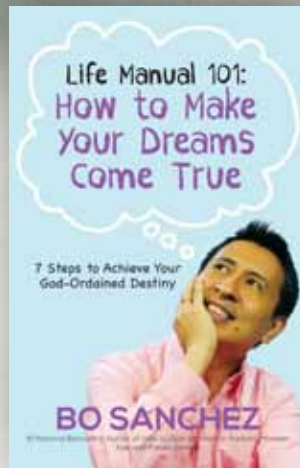
Paint Your Goals into *Reality*



By Bo Sanchez

Books for Your

Read more and do more of your goals this year! Here are some books that can guide you in turning your dreams into reality.



Life Manual 101: How to Make Your Dreams Come True by Bo Sanchez

This book will teach you what to do when your dreams are bigger than your resources, how to marry your purpose and hire your strategy, and find God's solution when you encounter obstacles that stop you from fulfilling your dream. Learn how to achieve your God-ordained destiny through this life-changing book.

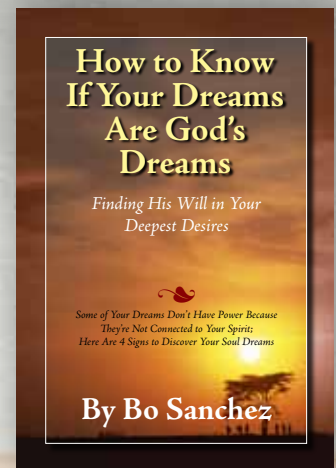
Novena to God's Love

This is a prayer booklet where you write your seven dreams and pray for them every day. Many have attested to how God answers the dreams written in this novena.



How to Know If Your Dreams Are God's Dreams
by Bo Sanchez

This free e-book will reveal to you the four signs to discover your soul dreams. Download it from www.BoSanchez.ph/GodsDreamByBoSanchez.pdf



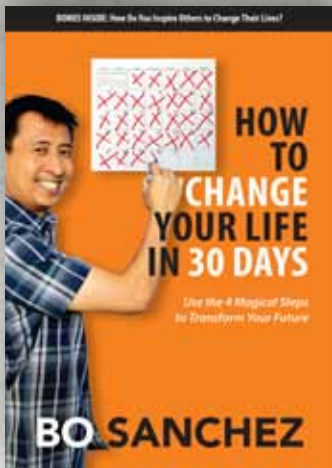
**How to Know
If Your Dreams
Are God's
Dreams**

*Finding His Will in Your
Deepest Desires*

*Some of Your Dreams Don't Have Power Because
They're Not Connected to Your Spirits.
Here Are 4 Signs to Discover Your Soul Dreams*

By Bo Sanchez

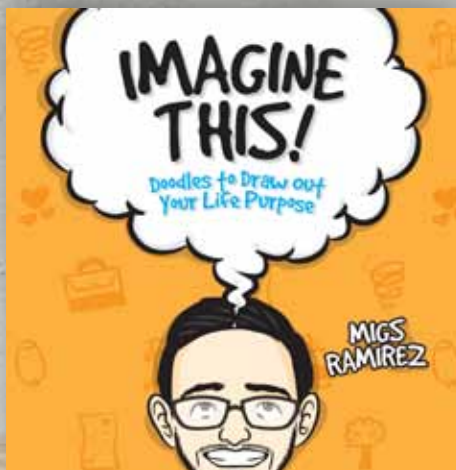
Goals



How to Change Your Life in 30 Days

by Bo Sanchez

This book is a step-by-step personal change manual. Each page, each story, and each principle will equip you to change your life for the better.



Imagine This! by Migs Ramirez

The book is a collection of images all about yourself. It's a creative toolbox containing symbols that will draw out the answers to your deepest questions: Who am I? How do I move on from my past? How do I make my dreams a reality? Using the power of images, this book uses your doodles to unleash your subconscious and unlock the chains of insecurity, anger, rejection, and fear that have been holding you back in life.

All three books are available at www.kerygmabooks.com/shop.
Novena to God's Love is available at The Feast book tables.

Hey, goal digger! Have you got plans, wishes, and desires that you want to see through to reality in 2019? I'm sure you're excited to wrap up this year and get started on the new one!

Let me tell you how you're going to set yourself up to make goals that you can actually accomplish.

No, it isn't about setting "smart" goals, as you may have typically approached them in the past. I'll fill you in on a secret: Smart goals don't work. They keep you cautious, limited in your thinking, and going through motions that don't necessarily take you forward.

We're going to talk about how to make your goal-setting serve you best, and it all starts with aligning yourself.

Here's how.

By Martine De Luna

Goal Digger:
Work on the
BEST
YOU
Ever



1. Start with the mindset.

“Mindset is everything” is a saying that’s been on many a quote, a coffee mug, or a Facebook meme.

But it’s absolutely true.

There is a principle in psychology and in the universal Law of Attraction that says, “Your thoughts create your reality.” In fact, you can read about this law in the Bible, at the very beginning of time, when God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God “thought” of creation, and literally thought creation into reality, and it happened.

It’s the same for any human being. What you think about is essentially what you will call into your reality.

Let’s take a job application as an example.

You see something you’d like to apply for in the job market and then look at the qualifications.

If you think, “I’m not smart. I don’t have this kind of degree, so I can’t do this job I’m applying for.” Guess what? You most certainly won’t get the job!

But, if you approach it with the mindset

of, “OK, what can I do to give myself a shot at applying for this job?” Then you change the script and the wiring inside you. Having a proactive mindset—one that doesn’t have you stopping at your own limitations—will help you at least rewire the way you think, even if you don’t get that job.

The point is, start “thinking right,” according to David Schwartz, PhD. Essentially, this means thinking in complete faith. “Those who believe they can move mountains, do. Those who believe they can’t, cannot. Belief triggers the power to do,” Dr. Schwartz wrote in *The Magic of Thinking Big*. When you think big, you will logically act big and approach life with a mindset of “I can do this,” even if you can’t logically see how.



~~IMPOSSIBLE~~

*Guiding Verse: "As a man thinketh, so is he."
(Proverbs 23:7)*

MINDSET TOOL: "Be, Do, Have."

"Be, Do, Have." Have you heard this saying? It was made popular by Zig Ziglar, the renowned personality development trainer.

In the simplest terms, it means you've got to *be* the person you've set out to be before you can *do*, and you have to *do* before you can *have*."

No matter what your role in society is, there are only two methods to live your life: Claw yourself up or place yourself where you want to be. The difference is with the mindset, as we discussed above. If your mindset is one where you wholeheartedly believe that you can do what you've set your mind on, then you can accomplish any goal you set, provided that the timing (a.k.a. God's timing!) is also right for you.

So how do you "be," to be able to accomplish your goals?

First, you have to decide if the goal you're aiming for is a good enough result. (If a goal you set is not good enough, then you will not program yourself to imbibe the "being" of the person you need to be for that goal.) So first, stop thinking and dwelling on "what if's," especially regarding the goal you've set! This is "BE-ing."

Next, *do*. This means that you live every day always seeing the end result you really want (yes, before you even logically have it), you act "as if" you are already that person living that goal. A person who is making his desired additional income will stop saying, "I don't have any money," and will instead say something like, "I am always supplied with money because I'm helping a lot of people." Even your actions: how you view life, how grateful you are, how loving you are, must *all* be infused with the energy of a person who is already living the goal-achieved life.

When you continually "be" and "do," you manifest your goal being achieved. Pretty soon, you'll literally "have" that goal, and it becomes your reality.

*Guiding Verse: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."
(Hebrews 11:1)*



Your actions: how you view life, how grateful you are, how loving you are, must all be infused with the energy of a person who is already living the goal-achieved life.





2. Make your goals bigger.

Honestly, if you want to reach your goals, you have to see the difference between what real goals and what non-goals are.

Some examples of non-goals:

- Paying your monthly phone bill.
- Paying your monthly utilities: electricity, water, etc.
- Paying for food and clothing.
- Paying for transportation.

These are “part-of-life” practices. They are common sense to achieve. In fact, these are already factored into the minimum livable income; they are non-goals and part of a decent human life. You should not have these anymore as your objectives or they will be the ceiling of your goals.

Instead, think of bigger goals.

How do you want to grow in your personal life?

What experiences do you want to have this year that will make you feel amazing?

How do you want to contribute to the causes of the world and to the lives of others?

Experiences, growth, and contribution: These should be on your goals! When your goals consider things that are beyond your day-to-day, you will make your day-to-day goals just a matter of fact; you won’t worry, grumble, and stress over them.

Remember how it says in the Word—“Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body. Is life not more . . .?” (Matthew 6:25).

This isn’t a license to not care about what you eat and drink, OK? (We’ll get to that in more detail later.) This passage flows right into the “seeking first God’s Kingdom.” What this means when it comes to goal-setting is that we should have concerns beyond the basic needs we should take care of. When we approach these goals as “a matter of fact,” we will not attach so much drama to them. Then, we can have a more meaningful life being a contributor to the world and to fulfilling a greater part of the mission we were called to on Earth.

MINDSET TOOL: List Your 2019 Goals as Experiences, Growth, and Contribution.

Instead of making a checklist of random bucket list items you want to do (with no real intention of hitting them), make a different kind of goals list.

On a paper, make three different columns: Experiences, Growth, and Contribution.

Experiences are opportunities you create that help you try something new, go somewhere in particular, maybe do something you’ve always wanted to do. These may naturally lead to your “Growth” list, which is all about how you want to nurture and develop yourself as a person. Things like writing a book, or maybe attending a certain kind of conference to elevate you may be on this list. Finally, your Contribution list is based on how you want to make an impact in your world or your area of mission.

All these goals will be based on your belief system, your mindset, your sense of “Be, Do, Have.”

3. Check your environment and make it support you.

Your environment has a direct effect on how you will reach your goals. This has to do with your physical surroundings, in particular.

Let’s talk about your body first. Your body supports what your

mind tells it to do. In fitness, when a coach challenges you to start optimizing your body, it's not exercise that we start with. It's your food, which is your fuel for your body and your mind. If you are not optimized in the way you nourish, guess what? You'll lower your immunity, get sick more easily, and maybe even injure yourself with exercise.

So I challenge you to have a better goal even before the new year begins, and that's to change the way you eat, for now, for the better, and for life.

Believe me, it all begins with the gut. Yes, you heard me: your gut.

It's true that your gut will never lie to you. In fact, research shows that it's your "second brain" and that the microbiome that lines your intestinal organs is responsible for the information that your gray matter ends up processing for the rest of your body. That means what you eat ultimately affects the quality of your life.

Guiding Verse: Whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

MINDSET TOOL: Food and Activity Audit

An audit is "an official inspection of an individual's or organization's accounts." Since your food and activities are what determine your daily choices and habits, auditing them even before you attempt your goals is logical. You want to have a strong foundation, don't you?

1. Check your food. Is it free of anything processed, artificial, and (I just have to say) simple sugars? If not, then I advise you: Chuck it out. Declutter your pantry, and then make it a weekly habit to buy fresh vegetables and fruits, and a whole lot more plant-based proteins. Your food is meant to give you energy, nourish you to optimal health, and give you the means to meet your other goals, like losing weight, lowering your blood pressure, and cutting your tendency for sweets.

2. Check your activities. Are you having too much Netflix time, not enough fitness? And if you are active, are you getting enough exercise—at least thirty minutes, four times a week, as recommended? By the way, exercise is *no excuse* for eating anything and everything created by man or found in the market. Your exercise is meant to keep you mentally fit more than anything, and it just happens to have physical effects, like lean muscles, optimal blood pressure levels, and increased levels of mental health.

At the end of the day, you are the one in control of how you reach your goals. When it comes to being what you need to be to reach your goals, there is only one thing you can control, and that's yourself. No magic apps or "smart goal" tools will work for you if these three keys are not clear and set. Submit your plans to God, the Creator, and take action in faith that you have what it takes to accomplish anything you set your mind to.

Work on your mind and your perspective about life.

Elevate the way you make goals.

Be mindful of the environment around you.

Remember to submit your plans to God, most of all.

Then you activate that principle (which you do know well)—"Trust in Him and He will act." 🕒





Art for a *cause*

By Elle Z. Silvestre

Mama, I have a company! Migmarks and Arts!” the young Miguela Puyat eagerly exclaimed to her mom, who couldn’t quite figure out what she just announced. She was ten years old then and wanted to become a businessman like her dad. She would make bookmarks and rosaries and sell them to her relatives, just so she could have more *baon*. But as she grew older, Miguela realized that the money should go somewhere else—that other people needed it more. She was exposed to public service at a tender age since her parents are advocates, and they influenced her to live a life for other people. She started using her art skills to teach street kids in the community to do beadworks so they can create and market their own products. Now, every time she creates something—whether it’s art or music—she finds it more meaningful when she is able to share her abilities and when her creations go to a good cause.

are not real, he illustrates the shadows and scratch marks, and makes the skin imperfect, which is what we are. We are not perfect, but he manages to make (his subjects) look beautiful,” Miguela explained. When drawing a person, the hand should be the size of the face to have the right proportion. Miguela, whose hands are much smaller than her face, believes that there is more perfection in imperfection. “I produced my art the way I see it in my head, but not the way other people see it or the way things are,” she added.

The Young Advocate

In the beginning, Miguela made trinkets for fundraising, but she soon found out that the most efficient way to make capital is to mass produce her artwork and put them on merchandise. She founded Migmarks and Arts, a social enterprise, to support her beneficiaries including Bantay Bata 163, helping



Miss Doodle

Miguela started dabbling in art when she was a kid, spending most of her alone time drawing her mom with a heart-shaped head. In class, she would also doodle a lot, and teachers would scold her because they thought she wasn’t listening. But when quarter exams came, she would get excellent grades.

A lot of her works are self-portraits. She sees herself in different obscure situations and puts them into art. Her significant experiences define the kind of artwork she produces. Sometimes, random ideas come to her like they are calling her to transfer them into a canvas, or she just draws aimlessly the thoughts wandering in her mind.

Miguela takes inspiration from the styles of Lucian Freud and David Hockney, British painters who do impasto and pop art, respectively. National artist Ang Kiukok, a Filipino painter of Chinese descent, also influenced her artworks. “He uses a surrealist art style. It looks unrealistic, the proportions

abused and sick children; Lingkod-ER Foundation, aiding indigent patients in the emergency rooms; DZMM TLC Public Service on Wheels, conducting community service in different areas of the Philippines; and the Pag-asa ng Pamilya Scholarship Foundation, sending destitute kids to college.

“I think the biggest blessing is just the satisfaction knowing people get the help they need, that there’s someone who will benefit from what I’m doing. Because what are you without helping others? It’s not about me, it’s about helping other people, and that’s what matters most in this process,” Miguela, now seventeen, shared.

The Passport to a Brighter Future

Miguela is on her last year in high school and is already scouting for an art school abroad. With a background that puts much value in education, helping three needy scholars



through Pag-asa ng Pamilya Scholarship Foundation enter college is a big deal for her. “I feel like other people deserve that quality education as well . . . And without it, they can’t move forward in life and be the best they can be,” she said.

Miguela acknowledges that she comes from a privileged background and wants to give other less fortunate youth the chance to prosper. “That, in essence, is what it’s all about—giving these people the opportunity to provide for themselves properly and for their family and not be stuck in minimum wage. Because the more they earn, the more they can support their family. The more they earn, the longer their parents can live,” she mused.


Setting Goals Beyond

With big dreams that go beyond herself, Miguela relies on making lists to jot down her goals and organize her life. “I love to write down what I have to do. I have a Google document built like a calendar, and I color-code everything with goals and targets and things to do,” she divulged. It’s a big help now that she has to juggle meeting requirements to graduate, making new designs for her merchandise, and building a portfolio of artwork to apply for art school. “Guess the pressure is on, but with the end goal inside, it doesn’t feel as hard. Something I like to follow is: You do what you can, and God will do what you can’t. So I do my best in everything, and whatever I can’t control, God will take care of it,” she said.

Message to the Youth

Miguela firmly believes that what is done with love is done well, because nothing worth having comes easy. “God’s gift is meant to be shared, no matter how difficult it is. What is done with love is done well, because nothing worth having comes easy,” she reflected.

“I love art, so I’m going to do art for the rest of my life and put it to good use,” Miguela conveyed with great conviction, as she favors to live a simpler life and be content.

Miguela has her fair share of insecurities, but for her, others’ judgments don’t matter. She concludes, “What you do is for you and if you want to do it for others, it is also for you because it makes you happy. I believe in a hopeful God—and in everything I do, I believe God only wants the best for me and He will be there for me the whole way.” 

About the Cover Painting: *The Child in a Rubble* explores the theme of going through obstacles and traumatic experiences through one’s life but being able to come out of it stronger. It is seen in the way that the girl is portrayed smiling. If people “unmuddle the muddled,” the child can still come out stronger, with a clearer vision in mind. Child abuse is wrong and every child has the right to recuperate, be given a future, and be given a chance to heal.

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UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGING MILLENNIALS IN THE WORKPLACE

By Ariel B. Driz

I was driving to a meeting while happily listening to a 1978 hit “Baby Come Back” by No Mercy. I noticed the reaction of my young colleague who was with me in the car, so I asked him, “Do you like my music?” He nodded. I thought, “This kid has taste!”

But he added, “It reminds me of the music my dad used to play.” Suddenly, probably for the first time in my life, I told myself, “I feel old!”


Millennials recently surpassed the baby boomer population numbers. These “kids” have a collective clout in all facets of society—in business, politics, religion, social media, etc.

This generation’s values, views, and behaviors are products of their over-doting Gen X parents who were largely left alone with their maid. In the U.S., the Gen X-ers were left alone to fend for themselves while Mommy and Daddy worked for the family and built their careers. They were called the “latchkey kids.” Thus, the Gen X-ers’ response to this deprivation from their parents was to be as nurturing as they can be to their kids.

The result: a different breed of young professionals who are often misunderstood in the workplace as lazy, entitled, and impatient.

Understanding their mindsets and preferences is the key to growing one’s business or organization.

1. **Millennials gravitate toward mentorships.** These kids grew up in an environment where parents were around to coach and give them perspective. They are not interested on the “how-to” but on the “why.”
2. **Millennials want a job where their creativity is valued.** They will be productive if you give them a creative outlet. These guys want to create culture rather than be part of the culture. They want to participate rather than wait.
3. **Millennials want to make an impact right away!** Their impatience stems from the “instant” society they were born into. While the oldies need to teach them the value of patience and delayed gratification, we can allow them to fill this need by providing opportunities for worthy causes, allowing them to mentor others and younger associates, giving them a growth plan, and embracing community activities.
4. **Millennials desire to work in a collaborative environment.** Eighty-eight percent of them want to work in social environments where their coworkers are their friends. They like to solve problems in teams.
5. **Millennials are driven by technology.** Fifty-nine percent of them say that state-of-the-art technology is a key factor in picking a job; more than forty-six percent has more than two hundred friends and followers on social media; and fifty-six percent of them think technology makes them more efficient.

Should we do whatever these young guys prefer? Not exactly. Knowing these will help us guide them to appreciate the right path to career life. 



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The Best Is Yet to COME

By JPaul Hernandez

Recently, I was talking to a successful forty-five-year-old who attends The Feast. He told me that he flirted early in life and got his girlfriend pregnant. So at a young age, he never stopped hustling to provide for his family and make ends meet.

After years of hard work, he is now a successful entrepreneur and his eldest child has graduated college. He feels tired because he hasn't taken a break for twenty years. He also has a lot of regrets because he thinks that if The Feast existed when he was young, he could have avoided getting his girlfriend pregnant and getting burnt out.


My friend is frustrated that he can't even enjoy the money and blessings he worked hard for because he had so many "what ifs" in life.

I embraced him and said, "Brother, I honor you for working hard for your family. I believe that God is God over lost time. It means that whatever you lost in the last twenty years, God will not just restore; instead, He can give you something better. He will replace it with bigger and better things. Be strong, and enjoy your new relationship with Jesus."

You see, our God doesn't exclude people who made mistakes or failed. He will meet you where you are and pour His blessings upon you if you are open to receive.

In Him, the older generation finds forgiveness and restoration, while the younger generation finds purpose and acceptance. Whatever age you belong to, The Feast is your family.

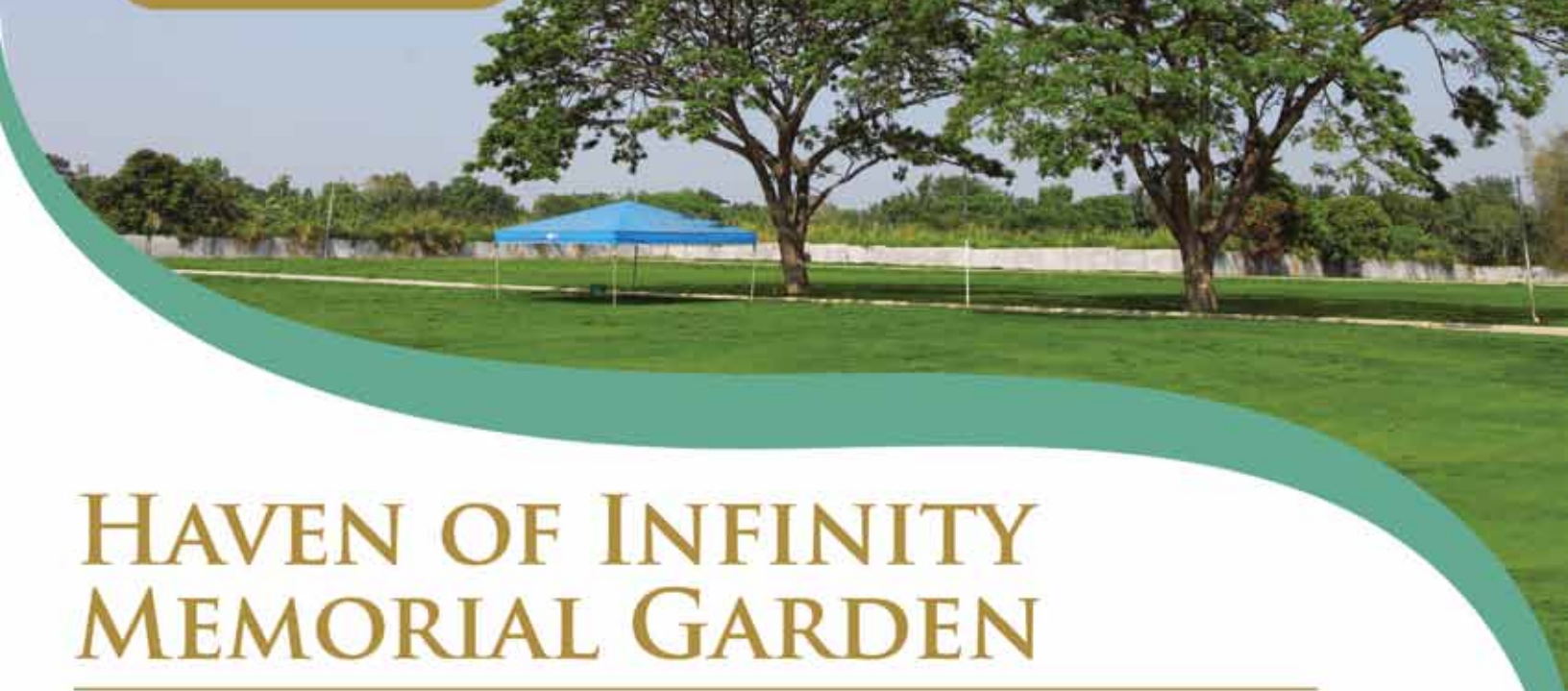
You are an overcomer, and we will grow old together, we will help each other, and most of all, we will love each other.

I'm excited to grow in this journey of life with you, my friend. 



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Love Beyond Disability

By Kyron Daniel Ramirez

Early in life, I already faced many challenges. I was born prematurely and was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. My family said I was a miracle baby but I nevertheless suffered from complications and underwent surgeries and therapies before I was a year old—two eye surgeries on my right eye and one on my left eye, and multiple physical and occupational therapies, among others.

Despite being a person with disability (PWD), my parents and grandparents helped me live a normal life. I attended a regular school, but I was subject to daily bullying and name-calling.

My normal life took a dive when my mom, Hellene, had to work in Dubai in 2005 to support our family. This was also the time when my dad opted to study nursing instead of working full-time.

Because of this situation, my parents entrusted my younger brother, Ali, and me to the care of our grandparents who lived in Las Piñas. We hardly saw our dad and he no longer communicated with us. We had no idea that Dad already had an affair with another woman prior to Mom's departure.


When Mom would come home every year, Ali and I would ask about Dad. She made up her answers to protect us from their broken relationship but eventually admitted that she and Dad had already separated. At first, my brother and I took everything in stride, seeing that our other classmates who also had broken families seemed OK. But later on, our "new" family status made me

feel unloved, lost, and without any sense of purpose in life. I hit rock bottom and questioned why this had to happen to us. To ease my pain and forget my problems, I resorted to vices.

I got tired of the confusion and disorder in my life so I sought help from my godparents who are members of a Catholic Charismatic community. They helped me go through counseling with a priest and introduced me to a youth group. I attended a Life in the Spirit weekend in 2012 where I began to know the Lord more, and committed to follow Him for the rest of my life.

I got my first job in 2014 as an HR assistant. I once again faced many struggles and lost touch with community. During this time,

God revealed Himself once again through the love of people around me—my family and friends, and most especially, my brothers and sisters in community. Our family's brokenness, the lack of intimacy and personal relationship, was restored by a bigger parent—the Almighty Father, as well as my bigger family, my brothers and sisters in Christ.

I continue to carry the cross of my disability and broken family. This cross helped me experience God's unfailing and constant grace and enabled me to see my ability and greater purpose in life. His love is the fuel that lets me break free from limitations and move out of my comfort zone to love and serve others. I'm thankful that the Lord allowed the painful experiences to mold me as the man He intends me to be. 



point of contact

I Pray That You Receive Your Miracles, in Jesus' Name!



I PRAY THAT GOD LIFT YOUR TRIALS, heal your diseases, bless your problems, and direct you to the path He wants you to take. I pray that God remove your fears and give you the courage to surrender your burdens to Him.

So place your hand over my hand, and let's pray with trust, together with our team of intercessors praying for you right now . . .

This page is our Point of Contact, our spiritual connection.

Say after me . . .

In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, I surrender to You my worries and anxieties. I surrender to You my needs, my problems, my trials. I place them all in Your big hands. And I open myself to all that You want to give to me. On this day, I say yes to Your love, to Your blessings, to Your healing, to Your miracles. And Lord, specifically, I ask for the following miracles for my life . . .

I believe that You answer my prayer in the best way possible! And I thank You in advance for the perfect answers to my prayers. I also ask for the special intercession of Mama Mary. I pray all this in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SPECIAL INTENTION FOR THIS MONTH:

Lord Jesus, as we begin another year, we pray that You equip us with a more imaginative mind, a more hardworking body, and a more loving heart as we set our goals and write down our dreams. May these goals and dreams bless our family, our friends, our community, our Church, and especially those who are lost, sick, and in need of Your healing. We trust that this year will be much better than last year, because You are by our side. We pray all of these, in Jesus' name. Amen.

E-mail your prayer requests to me at bosanchez@kerygmfamily.com or write to me at Shepherd's Voice Publications, #60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1109.

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